



Legislative Bulletin.....April 21, 2004

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Summary of the Bills Under Consideration Today:

Total Number of New Government Programs: 2
Year to Date Prior to Today’s Bills: 15

Total Cost of Discretionary Authorizations: \$0
Year to Date Prior to Today’s Bills: At least \$199.0 billion[#] over five years

Total Amount of Revenue Reductions: \$4 million over five years
Year to Date Prior to Today’s Bills: \$9.8 billion over five years

Total Change in Mandatory Spending: \$0
Year to Date Prior to Today’s Bills: \$474 million over five years

Total New State & Local Government Mandates: 0
Year to Date Prior to Today’s Bills: 10[#]

Total New Private Sector Mandates: 0
Year to Date Prior to Today’s Bills: 11

[#] This figure does not include H.R. 3873, the Child Nutrition Improvement and Integrity Act. A CBO analysis of this bill is not yet completed.

H.R. 3970—Green Chemistry and Research Development Act of 2004 (Gingrey)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled for consideration on Wednesday, April 21st, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 3970 would establish a new Green Chemistry Research and Development Program to coordinate federal green chemistry research taking place at the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). “Green chemistry” is defined in the bill as “chemistry and chemical engineering to design chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances.”

Specifically, the new program would support green chemistry research, development, demonstration, education, and technology transfer; examine ways the Federal government can create incentives for the use of green chemistry products and processes; facilitate the adoption of green chemistry innovations; expand education and training of students and chemists in green chemistry science; collect and disseminate information on green chemistry research; and provide venues for outreach and dissemination of green chemistry advances. The bill also requires the President to establish an interagency working group with NSF, NIST, DOE, EPA, and any other agency the President chooses to designate.

The bill authorizes (from sums otherwise authorized to be appropriated, i.e. the bill creates new set-asides within existing authorizations) \$26 million in FY05, \$28 million in FY06, and \$30 million in FY07.

Additional Background: According to the NSF, “through existing partnerships with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), NSF has been leveraging its investments in green chemistry and engineering for almost a decade. Beginning in 1991, the two NSF divisions announced a joint program in Environmentally Benign Chemical Synthesis and Processing, whose goal was to reduce the environmental footprint of manufacturing processes while maintaining economic competitiveness. In 1994, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between NSF and the EPA that had three components, one of which was a program to support Technology for a Sustainable Environment (TSE). The TSE program, launched in 1995 and administered nearly annually since then, will be formally reviewed in May 2004. In addition, some components of Biocomplexity in the Environment, an NSF Priority Area, support studies of the use of resources and pollutant transport in the environment.”

Committee Action: H.R. 3970 was introduced on March 16, 2004, and referred to the Committee on Science. The committee approved the bill by voice vote on April 1.

Administration Position: Administration witnesses testifying before the Science Committee expressed support for the intent of the legislation, but argued that the bill was unnecessary.

<http://www.house.gov/science/hearings/full04/mar17/bement.htm>

<http://www.house.gov/science/hearings/full04/mar17/gilman.pdf>

Cost to Taxpayers: The Congressional Budget Office estimates that H.R. 3970 would cost \$83 million over the 2005-2009 period, however this spending would come from existing authorizations.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: Yes, the bill creates one new program.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: The Committee on Science, in House Report 108-462, cites Article I, Section 8, but fails to cite a specific clause.

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H.R. 4030—Congressional Medal for Outstanding Contributions in Math and Science Education (Smith of Michigan)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled for consideration on Wednesday, April 21st, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 4030 would establish a Congressional medal to be awarded to private entities that have made significant contributions to improving the achievements of elementary or secondary students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Under the bill, the National Science Foundation (NSF) would select 40 finalists for medals and award a total of 10 medals annually, five to private companies with more than 500 employees and five to private companies with less than 500 employees.

Funding for the program would be taken from amounts already authorized for NSF activities in the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-368).

Committee Action: H.R. 4030 bill was introduced on March 25, 2004, and referred to the Committee on Science. The Subcommittee on Research approved the bill by voice vote on March 30, and the full committee reported the bill on March 31, also by voice vote.

Cost to Taxpayers: CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 4030 would have no significant budgetary impact and would not affect direct spending or revenues. Under the bill, the amounts authorized to be appropriated for NSF would remain at the levels set in the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002, but the scope of the authorized activities would be expanded to include the cost of administering the new program. According to NSF, those costs would be about \$500,000 a year.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: Yes, the bill creates one new program.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: A committee report citing constitutional authority is not available.

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H.R. 3713 — To designate the Federal building located at 250 West Cherry Street in Carbondale, Illinois the “Senator Paul Simon Federal Building” (Costello)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to for consideration on Wednesday, April 21th, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 3713 designates the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 250 West Cherry Street in Carbondale, Illinois, as the “Senator Paul Simon Federal Building”

Additional Background: Senator Paul Simon was born in 1928 and at the age of 19, Senator Simon became the Nation's youngest editor-publisher by saving the Troy Tribune in Troy, Illinois. He expanded his newspaper business to a chain of 14 weeklies in central and southern Illinois. Senator Simon used the newspaper to expose a syndicate gambling operation in Madison County. Senator Simon served in the United States Army for two years and at the age of 25, was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives. He was re-elected three times before being elected to the State Senate in 1962 for a four year-term. He was elected to another term, but mid-way through his term he was elected Lieutenant Governor and served until 1973. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974, where he served for ten years before being elected to the United States Senate in 1984. He passed away on December 9, 2003.

Committee Action: The bill was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on January 21, 2004. The Committee favorably reported the bill on February 25, by voice vote.

Cost to Taxpayers: The only costs associated with a post office renaming are those for sign and map changes, none of which significantly affect the federal budget.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: The Committee, in Report 108-450, cites constitutional authority in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution (Clause 7 grants Congress the authority to “establish Post Offices and post Roads”).

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H.R. 3147 — To designate the Federal building located at 324 Twenty-Fifth Street in Ogden, Utah, as the “James V. Hansen Federal Building” (Cannon)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to for consideration on Wednesday, April 21th, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 3147 designates the facility of the United States Postal Service located 324 Twenty-Fifth Street in Ogden, Utah, as the “James V. Hansen Federal Building”

Additional Background: James Hansen was born in 1932. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1951-1955. He worked as a real estate and insurance agent while also serving on the Farmington City Council from 1960-1972. He was elected to the Utah State House of Representatives in 1973 and served until 1980, from 1979-1980 he served as Speaker of the House. In 1980, he was elected to the 97th U.S. Congress and to each of the succeeding 10 Congresses. He retired at the end of the 107th Congress and is running for Governor of Utah.

Committee Action: The bill was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on September 23, 2003. The Committee favorably reported the bill on February 25, by voice vote.

Cost to Taxpayers: The only costs associated with a post office renaming are those for sign and map changes, none of which significantly affect the federal budget.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: The Committee, in Report 108-449, cites constitutional authority in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution (Clause 7 grants Congress the authority to “establish Post Offices and post Roads”).

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H.R. 4019—To address the participation of Taiwan in the World Health Organization (Chabot)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on Wednesday, April 21st, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 4019 would authorize the Secretary of State to:

- initiate a U.S. plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the annual summit of the World Health Assembly in May 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland;
- instruct the U.S. delegation to the World Health Assembly in Geneva to implement such a plan; and
- introduce a resolution in support of observer status for Taiwan at the summit of the World Health Assembly.

The Secretary would have to submit an unclassified, annual report to Congress on what he has done and will do to promote Taiwan's bid to obtain observer status.

The bill presents various findings about the importance of international health efforts and Taiwan's role in them, including: "In recent years Taiwan has expressed a willingness to assist financially and technically in international aid and health activities supported by the [World Health Organization]."

The bill notes that the World Health Assembly has allowed observers such as the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Order of Malta, and the Holy See to participate in the activities of the organization since the 1950's.

Additional Background: Nearly identical legislation has passed the House over the last several years, the most recent bills being S. 243, which the House passed by unanimous consent on May 14, 2003, and H.R. 441, which the House passed 414-0 on March 11, 2003.

Committee Action: On March 31, 2004, the International Relations Committee marked up and by unanimous consent ordered the bill reported to the full House.

Administration Position: The Bush Administration has strongly supported efforts to win observer status for Taiwan at the World Health Assembly.

Cost to Taxpayers: CBO confirms that H.R. 4019 would not yield any additional cost to the taxpayer.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: Previous legislation has mandated one-time reports from the Secretary of State. H.R. 4019 would make these one-time reports annual and ongoing.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: A committee report citing constitutional authority is unavailable.

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H.R. 1779—Guardsmen and Reservists Financial Relief Act (Beauprez)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on Wednesday, April 21st, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

Summary: H.R. 1779 would allow military reservists and national guardsmen to make penalty-free withdrawals from individual retirement accounts (IRAs) during an extended period of active duty (more than 179 days—although the withdrawals could be made at the beginning of or any other time during the call to extended duty). Reservists and guardsmen could repay these withdrawals (within two years after the end of duty) without penalty and without regard to the dollar limits otherwise applicable to IRA contributions. No tax deduction could be taken for the repayment contributions.

The provisions of this legislation would apply to individuals ordered or called to active duty after September 11, 2001, and before September 12, 2005.

Additional Background: Normally, there is a 10% penalty for early withdrawals from these federally authorized retirement accounts.

Contributions to an IRA are either partially or fully tax-deductible, and amounts in an IRA (including gains) are not taxed until they are distributed (and in some cases are not taxed at all). For more information on IRAs, visit this website:

<http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p590.pdf>

Committee Action: The bill was referred to the Ways & Means Committee on April 11, 2003, but was not acted upon by the Committee.

Administration Position: The Administration is taking no official position on this bill.

Cost to Taxpayers: The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that H.R. 1779 would reduce federal revenue by less than \$500,000 in the first year and by about \$4 million over five years.

Does the Bill Create New Federal Programs or Rules?: The bill would add a condition under which the penalty for early withdrawals from individual retirement accounts would be suspended.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Constitutional Authority: A committee report citing constitutional authority is unavailable.

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